Advocate's Voice

MARCH 2009

Cobb County is working hard to create a world for seniors that is way beyond just survival. No one could ever give each of us what we know we deserve and what would make us the happiest, but we are all aware of what constitutes a decent standard of living. Your Advocacy Team attended a public hearing sponsored by the Atlanta Regional Commission in Atlanta recently. We expected a rip-roaring meeting of angry constituents, but every person who spoke on behalf of folks in the community they represented or even if they spoke from personal experience, began by thanking the commissioners for the services they were receiving and ended with saying they didn't know what they would do if these services were cut or eliminated. There were services being provided to seniors that I didn't know were available and who was responsible for providing them. Knowing these things is the job your Team members have volunteered for, which is why we attend meetings and training sessions - to lessen our ignorance so we can be of greater help to all of you. You may be sitting on the very idea that may revolutionize all our lives. Knowledge is valuable only when it is shared.

There are many volunteers who help those less fortunate and it takes time and dedication, but when I think of folks being available to me if I am in need it's worth it. Don't sit at home rocking away your life or worrying yourself to death about circumstances you cannot control. Give of yourself by joining us in being a force for good. We might even be able to get you a cape and a HERO suit to wear. When you think of volunteering to be on the Advocacy Team don't think the donation of a few hours per week is not considered valuable. You could be the lifeline for a homebound senior by calling each day to see if all's well in the household and if not, call a neighbor or family member and maybe even Case Management to look into the situation. My mother and a neighbor two houses away, both in their eighties, agreed that when each arose in the morning she would hoist the flag on her porch as a signal all was well. It doesn't take much to be of great help and to give comfort to someone else.

Even though these are bad times and what used to be available may not be available now due to financial cuts, we **will** rise from the ashes. Of course the current battle is to keep the budgets of departments that work for and with seniors from being depleted any further. We must let our representatives know we are unhappy and that we are a force to be dealt with. We are familiar with the saying "the squeaky wheel gets the oil". Let's think now of "the lobbyist gets the laws written". We can become lobbyists if we join forces. We can help make Cobb County so friendly to her seniors that 50 year olds will be bleaching their hair to look like seniors.

As an example of what we can do to be heard, I want to let you know what a joy it was to be a part of a rally held at the capitol on January 29th to voice our opinions of the programs that are being threatened. Representatives were impressed by our numbers and our voices and promised to be in our corner. We are moving forward by leaps and bounds and a green and white logo that says "Be There 4 Seniors" made us very visible on the capitol steps with our signs, pins and stickers. This made us easily identifiable

even to passing traffic and enough to evoke questions from strangers when we were eating in the cafeteria. Come join us in the fight to be heard. Call us at 770-528-1446. We'll be waiting.

Your Team has in its possession a limited number of free cell phones whose only function is to dial 911. If you are in need of such a phone, give us a call. Other places you might find such phones are Goodwill, flea markets, garage sales and friends or relatives.